

A Defense of Jazz

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the waiter came and fanned me with the check. Then I passed out.

When I came to I married Jessica and paid the check with her dowry.

Was that immoral?

Yet they say jazz is ruining the morals of our youth. In my thesis, which I shall submit to the Fellows of the Harvard and Yale corporations and the Girls of the Bryn Mawr and Vassar corporations, I shall convince the world that jazz is justified, inevitable and harmless. I shall pepper the thesis with enough allusions in Latin to get it by as a thesis.

My argument will be along the following lines, and see if you don't think there is some sense to it: These are parlous times. They are the times in which every good

tractors, trans-oceanic non-stop flights, monkey glands, radio concerts, votes for women, subways and a 75:25 standard of morals.

I admit that we would be better off without the radio concerts.

Nevertheless, under these circumstances, who is going to dance the minuet today? Anyone suggesting such a thing would be and should be laughed to scorn. Jessica would not even dance a gavotte, and everyone knows there is an element of risk, of thrill in the gavotte. Your correspondent has seen men and women, cold sober, trip themselves or each other during a gavotte movement, and serious injury has ensued.

If things ever slow down, and they never will, then jazz will go, but it never



If this was a slow age they'd be dancing minuets.

man should come to the aid of his country. Life is not the placid thing it was when women wore crinolines. Life could not be anything but placid with a crinoline around.

(You understand this is all in outline, sort of.)

The same thing applies to any of those getups the girls of ancient times used to rig themselves out in, for what reason the stars alone know. Those twelfth century effects with the stovepipe hats and nine or ten yards of gauze floating off them for no reason whatsoever. I refer to the headgear of the Sleeping Beauty period. Small wonder she went to sleep!

And those Elizabethan ruffs. No wonder history states that Queen Elizabeth was straight laced. How could Sir Walter Raleigh put his arm around her neck when it was already done up in enough material to keep the Troy collar factories going a month?

I shall go on to point out that modern life is essentially rapid and therefore essentially jazzy. I shall prove by actual statistics and charts that the slowest man in the United States to-day is seven and one-quarter times faster than the fastest man was when it took nine days to get from Boston to Philadelphia.

And what is more, I guarantee to do this without making a single joke about Philadelphia! Or Boston!

The music of a period is a reflection of the mood of the time. If a people feels jazzy they have jazz music and they live jazz lives, and the refined, moral people who are fortunately always in the minority, may denounce until they denounce themselves hoarse, but it will not do them any good. If a people feels minuettish; if circumstances are of a minuettish type, then you will find slow, stately music such as our ancestors of Colonial times had, when the fastest thing out was Paul Revere.

We have the Twentieth Century Limited, Conan Doyle, airplane mails, Ford

will. It is here to stay until we revert to type. That is why your correspondent feels sure that you would get a good laugh out of these clippings about jazz, wherein almost all of the dominies, lots of the dancing masters, and even Victor Herbert, attempt to take falls out of jazz. Their protests are futile and, incidentally, they are all wrong because as Whatchacallit has so aptly said: "Whatever is, is right," and jazz certainly is, isn't it?

Your correspondent has proved his case for jazz, and he hasn't even said a word about the war!

Opera Scenery

BORIS ANISFELD, Russian impressionistic artist who made the design for the costumes and settings of "The Snow Maiden" for the Metropolitan Opera Company last season, is busiest in the summer. Then he and his assistants spread the canvas on the floor that is laid down over the orchestra seats in the opera house and are able to work without interruption. It is very curious to see this scenic artist doing his work with brushes as big as brooms and great pails of paint.

Harmony is the aim of this impressionist and he seeks it in form and color. He says that while figures in a stage picture must be distinct from one another they must at the same time combine and give singleness of effect.

Anisfeld makes a series of small paintings representing the various scenes. He seeks to visualize the life in color and dress of the period, as each opera demands, and that period receives long and earnest study. Before he made a drawing he had worked two months on "The Snow Maiden." The problem was to treat an ancient Russian period in terms of fantasy. To make his careful little paintings took another month and five more months were required for the scenes themselves.



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